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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON CAFTA, JULY 17, 2003

1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 7/17 entitled "The ball". "The Central American presidents will meet in Guatemala to analyze the progress of CAFTA negotiations and to follow up on an initiative presented by Spanish President Jose Maria Aznar, who said in a meeting held in San Salvador last week that the ball to start the negotiations for a free trade agreement with the EU is in Central America's court."

"They will also talk about what they should have discussed before CAFTA negotiations kicked off, the need to present a common proposal to the US. After the show they put during the Tegucigalpa Round of negotiations, where they were unable to move forward as a result of the discrepancies between the Central American negotiation teams, the presidents were required to step up to provide the necessary political backing for their negotiators."

"We anticipate positive results from this presidential summit, considering that these meetings are frequent but we don't see any results. We especially expect some progress on the regional integration process. We'll see if Central America hands the ball over to President Aznar."

Palmer